



APTA Surveys Recession Impact on Public Transit Properties

In March of this year, the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) published a summary of a national survey they conducted to determine the "Impacts of the Recession on Transit Agencies." The survey results were frightening.

"Public transportation agencies across the United States are in the midst of unprecedented budgetary challenges as a result of the current recession. Transit agencies have been forced to cut service, lay off employees, raise fares, slow capital improvements and take many other actions to survive. More troubling is that this comes at a time when transit use is at near modern record levels."

The survey report provides a glimpse of the dire affects of the current recession on public transit agencies and their clients across the country. The survey focused on actions that transit agencies have taken since January 1, 2009 and action they plan to take in response to the current economic climate. The respondents included 151 transit agencies that belong to APTA and they represent more than 80% of transit riders in the nation.

The following survey results are taken from the introduction of the report:

"Public transportation agencies across the United States are in the midst of unprecedented budgetary challenges as a result of the current recession."

- ✓ Revenue decline is widespread, with 90 percent of public transit agencies reporting flat or decreased local funding and 89 percent reporting flat or decreased state funding.
- ✓ Budgetary pressures are increasing with seven out of ten agencies (69%) projecting budget shortfalls in the coming year.
- ✓ Despite actions taken to address budgetary issues, 11 transit agencies project shortfalls in excess of 20 percent, and the cumulative projected shortfall among participating transit agencies is almost \$2 billion.
- ✓ More than 8 out of 10 transit agencies (84%) have cut service or raised fares or are considering either of those actions for the future, with nearly three in five agencies (59%) having already cut service or raised fares.
- ✓ Larger transit agencies were more likely to have a decrease in local, regional, or state funding, or fare revenue than other tran-

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Notes from the Top

by Donna Lavigne

Hello! It's been a while. After a break, we are back in action with our newsletter. There are many exciting things happening in transit and we know that you will want to be a part of future events.

Where do I start? As always, the Public Transportation Section has a multitude of things going on... we have completed our reviews of the Section 5310, Section 5311, JARC and New Freedom applications and have submitted them to FTA, updating contracts for FY 2010-2011, preparing for the Annual Public Transportation Conference, receipting, inspecting and issuing transit vehicles, and preparing to close the FY 2009-2010 budget files.



We are moving forward with our statewide coordination efforts. We are appreciative of the work that the Metropolitan Planning Organizations are doing to support FTA's coordination. Please make an effort to attend the coordination meetings in your district.


We are happy to announce that you will be greeted by a new face in the Elderly and Disabled Program – that of Ms. Karen Harris. Karen is the new Elderly and Disabled Assistant Program Manager and previously worked in the DOTD Traffic Services Section as an Accounting Specialist 2. Karen has experience in areas of accounts payable, purchasing, grants management and contracting. Karen replaced Bennie Nobles who now wears a new hat. Bennie was promoted to the Safety and Security Program Manager position in November 2009. Bennie's new duties include oversight of the New Orleans Fixed Guideway safety and security program, the FTA Drug and Alcohol Program, and the Bus Safety and Security Program. All of you attending

the conference in October will get a chance to congratulate Karen and Bennie.

The Annual Public Transportation Conference is around the corner and we are excited about the conference agenda. The conference will be held at the Sheraton in New Orleans October 13-15, 2010. Please look for the registration packet on the website soon.

Michelle Horne was presented the 2010 DOTD Secretary's Award of Excellence on June 17, 2010. Michelle coordinated with FTA in securing 100% federal funding for the continuation of the LA Swift Intercity Bus Service that provides transportation between Baton Rouge, Sorrento, LaPlace and New Orleans. She also took the lead and developed the grant application for the rural transit systems that produced an additional \$15.2 Million following the appropriation of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA). Congratulations Michelle for a job well done.

Finally, we would like to encourage you to send topics or articles for future newsletter editions to Wanda Walker. If you would like to highlight your transit system or recognize one of your staff members, we will provide a forum to do so. Sharing of innovative ideas, techniques and uplifting stories about your system, a special client, a state agency, local government official or a transit friendly legislator are most welcome. We want the transit newsletter to be an informative publication that addresses issues of interest to you and others.

Thanks for your continued support of public transit and we look forward to seeing you at our annual conference. 

Announcements

2010 Annual Public Transit Conference

When:

October 13-15, 2010

Where:

Sheraton New Orleans Hotel

500 Canal Street

New Orleans, LA 70130

\$133 for single or double

(504) 525-2500

More Information:

Contact Wanda Walker at (225) 274-4302

or by email at Wanda.Walker@la.gov

Events Calendar

APTA Conferences

State Public Transit Partnership
Conference

August 4-5, 2010 Seattle, WA

Risk Management Seminar

August 1-4, 2010 Seattle Washington

Annual Meeting & Expo

October 3-6, 2010 San Antonio, TX

Bus Technical, Maintenance &
Procurement Workshop

October 3-5, 2010 San Antonio, TX

For more information: www.apta.com

Other Upcoming Conferences/Training:

ADA, Mobility Management &
Paratransit Workshop

August 8-10, 2010 Little Rock, AR

SWTA Transit Marketing Workshop

September 19-21, 2010 Tempe, AZ

For more information: www.swta.org

TRB 19th National Rural Public &
Intercity Bus Transportation Conference

October 24-27, 2010 Burlington, VT

For more information: www.trb.org

LA DOTD Public Transportation

Annual Public Transit Conference 2010

October 13-15, 2010 New Orleans, LA

For information: www.dotd.la.gov

NTI Courses:

For information: www.ntionline.com

Transportation Safety Institute Classes

Courses are offered around the country
on various topics throughout the year.

For more information, please visit:
www.tsi.dot.gov



Spotlight on...



DOTD Training on Vehicle Maintenance Management & Inspection

This past May, DOTD provided an important three-day training course on “Vehicle Maintenance Management & Inspection (VMMI).” The course was held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Baton Rouge May 17-19. The training was free to all participants and was well attended.

The three-day program was designed to improve the maintenance oversight of fleets of the smaller vehicles used by most of the Section 5310 and Section 5311 providers in Louisiana. The program is based on an established maintenance training curriculum developed by Halsey King and applied to countless vehicle fleets nationwide. This popular workshop set the stage for a greater understanding of Section 5311 bus maintenance activities. The course was designed specifically for managers or technicians who operate/maintain rural and complementary vans, cutaway Paratransits and buses under 30ft in length.

The course covered the following topics over the three-day period:

Day 1

- ✓ Practical and legal reasons for proper inspection and preventive maintenance.
- ✓ DOT requirements - Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations.
- ✓ Principles of vehicle safety inspection.

- ✓ Hands-on training of vehicle safety inspection.
- ✓ Vehicle safety inspection testing.

Day 2

- ✓ Relationship between maintenance and operations.
- ✓ The manager’s role in maintenance.
- ✓ Cost center of fleet maintenance.
- ✓ Efficient and effective forms and reporting.
- ✓ How technology helps maintenance management.
- ✓ Manufacturers’ standards and expectations.

Day 3

- ✓ Maintenance outsourcing - when to do it, how to manage it.
- ✓ Review and final examination.

The participants learned how to read a shop work order, which is an important part of the overall process since the work order captures the cost of labor and parts as well as the vehicles repair history. They also had a first hand glimpse of what “Catastrophic Maintenance Failure” looks like and its causes.

The course concluded with an examination and eventual certification as a Certified Vehicle Maintenance Manager. The class was limited to 30 participants and all seats were filled. 🇺🇸

One of the DOTD PT Section's mandates is to provide information and technical assistance to transit



providers in Louisiana to assist them in meeting their requirements for FTA funding. These activities come in many different formats and venues. DOTD PT provides numerous training courses, workshops, and training material as well as a website and an annual conference. To keep all of our constituents up to date on DOTD PT's activities, DOTD On The Go features just a few selected items each quarter.

Michelle Horne Receives Secretary's Award

On June 17, 2010, Michelle Horne of the DOTD PT staff received the DOTD Secretary's Award for Excellence. The award was given for her outstanding efforts on the following projects:

- ✓ Secured 100% federal funding for the LA Swift.
- ✓ Orchestrated the process and prepared the documentation to extend the current LA Swift contract.
- ✓ Prepared the new RFP and coordinated with the DOTD Procurement Section in advertising the LA Swift Intercity Bus Service.
- ✓ Took the lead and developed the grant application for the rural transit systems that produced an additional \$15.2 Million following the appropriation of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA).

Congratulation Michelle!

Coordination on Street Car Extension

DOTD PT in its role as the State Safety Oversight

agency for safety and security issues relating to fixed guideway (streetcar) issues is currently coordinating with the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (NORTA) and the FTA on an extension of the street car system in New Orleans along Loyola to the Union Passenger Terminal.


DOTD Vehicle Specifications Committee

The DOTD Vehicle Specifications Committee will be attending the BUSCON EXPO September 29-30, 2010 being held in Navy Pier, Chicago.

TRB Rural Transit Conference Scholarships

As shown on the Calendar on Page 3, the 19th National Rural Public & Intercity Bus Conference is being held in Burlington, VT this year on October 24-27. The DOTD will be providing scholarships to a few rural transit agencies to attend the conference. For more information, contact Wanda Walker at (225) 274-4302 or Wanda.Walker@LA.GOV

In The Spotlight

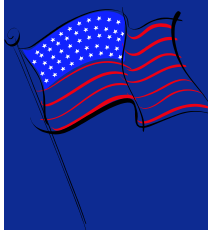
If your agency or someone within your agency deserves recognition for a job well done, or has already received recognition or an award, please let us know. Email or send a brief description, photos, and contact information to Wanda.Walker@la.gov or to Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development/ Public Transit Section, attn: Wanda Walker, P.O. Box 94245, Baton Rouge, LA 70804. 

Contact Information Announcement

In our attempt to keep everyone informed of special events, workshops, conferences, and important information regarding public transportation in Louisiana, DOTD PT maintains a Contact Database. If information about your organization - new phone

number, new director, new address or email - has changed, please help us keep our database current.

Email your updated information to: publictransportation@la.gov



Thanks for your Help!

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sit agencies. Among larger agencies, more than half (54%) have already increased fares, and two in three (66%) have cut service. Nearly all (97%) of larger agencies have cut service or raised fares or are considering doing so in the future.

- ✓ *More than half of all transit agencies (53%) have eliminated positions and one in three (32%) have laid off employees. Among larger transit agencies, the cuts in staff have been more common, with four out of five (80%) reducing positions and more than half (57%) laying off employees.*


As reported above, 90% of the agencies surveyed are facing flat or decreasing local and state funding. A total projected shortfall of \$2 billion was reported by survey participants. While the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding did provide \$8.4 billion in capital funding for public transit projects and up to 10% was permitted for use in operating expenses, only a third of the agencies reporting in the survey were able to make use of the operating funding (the authority to use ARRA funds for operating came in an amendment after most agencies had already programmed their available funds).

The impact of the current economic decline is being felt throughout the public transit sector. Agencies across the country are reducing employee benefits, pay and total employment. They are also reducing service hours and routes. However, some of the hardest hit are the largest providers.

The APTA survey reported that agencies providing greater than 25 million annual trips per year are being forced to make service cuts (geography and peak period) and fare increases. Over half of the large agencies reporting have been forced to dip into their funding reserves.

While it is accepted that this economic downturn will pass, transit agencies are making

changes that will be slow to turn back. APTA concluded its report by saying, “These cut-backs are happening as public transportation is reaching levels of popularity not seen in half a century: despite high unemployment, 2009 saw the second-highest ridership in fifty-three years. In order to protect this vital transit service, state, local and federal partners must provide critical funding to help public transit agencies move beyond the immediate economic crisis.”

For a full copy of APTA's survey results, go to:
http://www.apta.com/resources/reportsandpublications/Documents/Impacts_of_Recession_March_2010.pdf 



From Capital Hill...

By the end of July, the House of Representatives is expected to vote on its version of the FY 2010 Transportation-HUD appropriations bill. The House bill would increase FTA spending by 5% over current levels with almost all of the increases going directly into the FTA formula grant programs. The Senate's version of the Transportation-HUD spending bill, however, has not substantial increases in spending. It has cleared the Senate Appropriations Committee but is not yet scheduled for a vote on the Senate floor. 